

**Request for Application:**  
***CDC-AUCD Leadership Opportunity***  
**Act Early Ambassadors: State, Territorial,**  
**or Tribal Liaisons to**  
**CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early."**

**Act Early Ambassador Program Overview**

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities](#) and the [Association of University Centers on Disabilities \(AUCD\)](#) announce a funding opportunity for Act Early Ambassadors and Tribal Act Early Ambassadors to work with CDC's "[Learn the Signs. Act Early.](#)" (LTSAE) program to improve early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, including autism, by:

- promoting the adoption and sustained integration of family-engaged developmental monitoring using LTSAE milestone checklist resources in programs/systems that serve young children (birth-5 years) and their families (e.g., WIC, home visiting, child welfare, early care and education, etc.);
- serving as a state or territorial representative of CDC's national LTSAE program; and
- supporting the work of Act Early Teams and other state/territorial/tribal or national initiatives to improve early identification of developmental delay and disability.

**This funding opportunity will support a one-year term (with renewal for up to 2 additional years if invited) for 3 Act Early Ambassadors and 3 Tribal Act Early Ambassadors. Selected applicants will join an established cohort of 57 Ambassadors.**

**Eligible Applicants**

Individuals who reside or work in **Wyoming, Wisconsin, Nevada, or Montana** and individuals who are members of **American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal organizations** are eligible to apply.

**Learn the Signs. Act Early. Program Background**

CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program aims to improve early identification of developmental delays and disabilities, including autism, by promoting family-engaged developmental monitoring (regularly tracking milestones) so children and their families can get the services and support they may need, as early as possible. Family-engaged developmental monitoring, using [family-friendly milestone checklists](#) like those offered by LTSAE, is important for early identification of developmental delays and disabilities. Developmental monitoring/surveillance in addition to periodic developmental screening, is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

While other efforts focus on the promotion of routine general developmental and autism-specific screening, ***the focus of LTSAE and the Act Early Ambassador program is to engage, educate, and empower families and other caregivers to monitor milestones and discuss a child's developmental progress between, and as a complement to, recommended screenings.*** LTSAE-supported

developmental monitoring complements screening by engaging those who care for young children in celebrating a child's developmental progress and discussing any concerns. If concerns are identified during monitoring, LTSAE reinforces AAP's recommendation for a developmental screening or direct referral for further evaluation and services.

### **Qualifications for an Act Early Ambassadorship**

Most importantly, this leadership opportunity aims to identify individuals who share the "Learn the Signs. Act Early." commitment to improving early childhood programs, systems, and outcomes related to identifying young children with developmental delay and disability early so they and their families can get the help they need.

This opportunity is open to all who meet the criteria and can fulfill the responsibilities. Those who have previously served as Act Early Ambassadors are eligible to re-apply. Awards will be made based on an objective review that includes standardized scoring, past participation (for returning Ambassadors), two independent reviews, and group discussion.

To be considered, applicants must:

- reside or work in the state/territory they wish to represent as an Ambassador or be a member of an American Indian and Alaskan Native tribal organization;
- be able to commit to performing the role of Ambassador for the entire term, **through August 30, 2024**;
- be connected to or familiar with state/territorial/tribal programs that serve young children and their families, such as childcare, WIC, Early Head Start, home visiting, primary health care, or others;
- be involved in or familiar with any cross-systems efforts to improve developmental monitoring/screening and early identification of developmental delay and disability in their state/territory such as the Health Resources and Services Administration's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) grants;
- have knowledge and expertise in child development and/or systems that support families with young children and/or early identification and referral for developmental delay/disability;
- have good presentation and communication skills; and
- have a strong interest in working collaboratively to further the goals of CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early." program in their state or territory.

### **Responsibilities and Requirements of the Act Early Ambassadorship**

Ambassadors are encouraged to apply individual creativity and expertise toward meeting their state's, territory's, or tribe's unique challenges related to early identification, with a focus on promoting family-engaged developmental monitoring. CDC's LTSAE program offers [some examples of past creative activities](#) to promote early identification.

Successful Ambassadors are highly resourceful and seek strategic connections. Act Early Ambassador responsibilities typically require about 6-10 hours per month.

### **Act Early Ambassadors are required to:**

- work with CDC's LTSAE program, AUCD, fellow Ambassadors, and their state, territory, or tribal Act Early Team or other related collaborative initiatives to support national, state/territorial, and local activities to improve early identification of developmental delay and disability;
- focus efforts on increasing family-engaged developmental monitoring through the promotion and sustained integration of LTSAE materials into state-wide systems and other programs that serve families with young children;
- collaborate with programs that serve young children and their parents, such as Head Start and Early Head Start, WIC, home visiting, IDEA Part C/Child Find, and others, as well as health care and childcare professionals to introduce and sustainably integrate LTSAE developmental monitoring tools and training into the work of those programs with parents and professionals;
- commit to performing the role of Ambassador for the entirety of this term (through August 30, 2024);
- develop, maintain, and implement a work plan that includes at least 2 Ambassador goals; at least 1 must advance the adoption and sustained integration of developmental monitoring using LTSAE in at least one state-wide system/program or high-reach program serving AI/AN families with young children such as WIC, home visiting, IDEA Part C/Child Find, early care and education (including early Head Start), child welfare, or similar;
- participate in 1 hour Ambassador technical assistance calls with AUCD and CDC every other month;
- prepare a brief mid-year report of Ambassador activities (typically collected through a survey);
- prepare an annual report of Ambassador activities (typically collected through a survey);
- participate in an annual training, in-person in Atlanta, GA.

Additionally, Act Early Ambassadors are encouraged (but not required to):

- collaborate with state agencies and others to improve policy and programs related to early identification;
- post updates and share resources among the network of Ambassadors (through the Ambassador email listserv and other mechanisms);
- participate in 1-hour "learning circle" webinars every other month;
- participate in 1-hour evaluation workshops every month;
- participate in 1-hour, topic-specific "Act Early" webinars on a quarterly basis; and
- present Ambassador achievements and lessons learned at state and national conferences and other appropriate forums.

### **Act Early and Tribal Act Early Ambassador Support**

To support Tribal Act Early Ambassadors and Act Early Ambassadors, AUCD will provide the following:

- **Act Early Ambassadors:** \$6,000 annual stipend plus travel expenses for the annual Ambassador Training
  - The stipend can be used to support a variety of activities related to the implementation of the Ambassador work plan. Please note, if you cannot accept a stipend for Ambassador efforts related to work you're already carrying out, you can use the stipend for printing LTSAE

- materials, convening meetings, and other pre-approved activities.
- Stipends are distributed in two installments; the first \$3,000.00 installment upon completion of the Act Early Ambassador orientation and the second \$3,000.00 midway through your Ambassador year.
- **Tribal Act Early Ambassadors:** \$8,000 annual stipend plus travel expenses for annual Ambassador Training
  - The stipend can be used to support a variety of activities related to the implementation of the Ambassador work plan. Please note, if you cannot accept a stipend for Tribal Act Early Ambassador efforts related to work you're already carrying out, you can use the stipend for printing LTSAE materials, convening meetings, and other pre-approved activities.
  - Stipends are distributed in two installments; the first \$4,000.00 installment upon completion of the Act Early Ambassador orientation and the second \$4,000.00 midway through your Tribal Act Early Ambassador year.
- Scheduled and as-needed technical assistance provided by email, phone, and webinar.
- Structured peer support, and a forum to network, share ideas, and problem-solve with colleagues working on similar issues nationwide.
  - Note: participation in in-person meetings, webinars, and the Ambassador group email list helps keep Ambassadors connected with one another; this connection to other Ambassadors is among the most valued aspects of the Ambassador experience.
- Technical expertise and consultation, and information from leading national experts in the fields of child development, developmental disability, and health promotion.

## **Timeline**

**Application Deadline:** Applications are accepted until July 28, 2023

**Act Early Ambassador Term:** September 1, 2023-August 30, 2024

**2023 Annual Training:** September 27-28, 2023, in Atlanta, GA

## Application Procedure

To be considered eligible, applicants are required to complete and submit all sections of the application and include all required attachments. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. You will receive a notification of the receipt of your application no later than 48 hours following submission. If you have not received a notification of receipt within this timeframe, please [contact](#) Tida Sonetirot ([tsonetirot@aucd.org](mailto:tsonetirot@aucd.org)).

### Fiscal Agent

The Ambassador stipend must be awarded to a fiscal agent that will receive and manage the funds on the Ambassador's behalf; **applications must include the signature of the fiscal agent representative**. However, please note: the Ambassadorship is tied to the Ambassador, not the fiscal agent organization, so in the event the Ambassador must give up their Ambassadorship before the end of the term, the Ambassadorship will be recompeted at AUCD's discretion. Please direct questions concerning the Act Early Ambassador stipend or fiscal agent requirement to Tida Sonetirot ([tsonetirot@aucd.org](mailto:tsonetirot@aucd.org)).

## Questions/More Information

AUCD contact: Tida Sonetirot | [tsonetirot@aucd.org](mailto:tsonetirot@aucd.org)

CDC/NCBDDD contact: Karnesha Slaughter, MPH | [KSlaughter2@cdc.gov](mailto:KSlaughter2@cdc.gov)

\*Application begins on the next page. \*

## Act Early Ambassador Application

State/Territory/Tribal Entity: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Current Professional Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of any cross-systems initiative to improve developmental monitoring/screening and/or early identification of developmental delay in your state/territory/tribe?  Y  N  Former Member

If yes, please name the initiative and describe your role: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a US citizen? (Non-citizens are eligible to apply; knowing citizenship is helpful in accounting for security requirements for access to the CDC campus.)

Y  N

Are you a full-time resident and/or working in the state/territory/tribal entity you are representing?

Y  N

Are you currently an active member of your state or territory's Act Early Team?

Y  N  N/A; no such team exists

Required Attachments (submit by email as a single file):

- Headshot** (If selected for Ambassadorship, will be used along with bio on the CDC and AUCD Ambassador webpages)
- Brief Bio (250 words or less):** Highlight relevant training and recent professional experience and any qualifications not covered below. (If selected for Ambassadorship, bio will be used on the CDC and AUCD Ambassador web pages)
- Personal Statement (250 words or less):** Tell us about your interest in becoming an Act Early Ambassador and how this role fits with your personal and professional goals.
- Proposed Ambassador Goals (500 words or less):**  
Be sure to describe the following:
  - At least 2 goals that you hope to accomplish during your term as an Act Early Ambassador and why you believe you will be successful in achieving them.

- Any relevant personal and professional contacts that may help support your success.
- Any past success you have had in influencing practices, processes, or policies to improve early childhood programs/systems.
- Your plans for establishing and/or participating in your state/territory's Act Early State Team.

Remember: Goals should be specific and should detail the potential for sustaining impact beyond your term. Remember that at least 1 of your goals must advance the adoption and sustained integration of developmental monitoring using LTSAE in one state-wide system/program or high-reach program serving AI/AN families with young children such as WIC, home visiting, IDEA Part C/Child Find, early care and education (including early Head Start), child welfare, or similar.

Sample Ambassador Goals:

- (1) Collaborate with state Head Start and Early Head Start to improve developmental monitoring by systematically integrating the regular use of LTSAE milestone checklist materials, including the CDC *Milestone Tracker* app, into classrooms and as part of regular parent-teacher meetings state-wide.
- (2) Partner with state and local WIC leaders to integrate CDC's Developmental Monitoring in WIC Program into regular WIC visits, to increase developmental monitoring and referrals for developmental concerns.
- (3) Work with early childhood state agencies to incorporate CDC's "Watch Me! Celebrating Milestones and Sharing Concerns" online developmental monitoring training into early care and education training programs.
- (4) Work with state-wide home visitation programs to increase developmental monitoring by integrating the use of LTSAE milestone checklists into home visits and train home visitors to make referrals for developmental screening.
- (5) Work with my state's American Academy of Pediatrics chapter/early childhood champion to promote the use of LTSAE milestone checklists, including the CDC's *Milestone Tracker* app, as a tool to support developmental surveillance between well-child visits.

**Required Letters of Support (2)**

- **Attach a letter from your supervisor/Program Director that supports your application (one-page maximum).**
- **Attach a letter of support from an individual (from outside your organization of employment) who can attest to any past success you have had in terms of fostering cross-system collaboration to create positive change for young children and their families.**

Please read and check the boxes below before signing:

- I fully understand the requirements and responsibilities associated with an Act Early Ambassadorship.**

Applicant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Fiscal Agent (Print) \_\_\_\_\_

Fiscal Agent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Submit the completed form to Tida Sonetirot at [tsonetirot@aucd.org](mailto:tsonetirot@aucd.org).